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THE

COALITION MINISTRIES

OF

1783 AND 1853.

BY

EDWARD CAPEL WHITEHURST.

“The evils which flow from party are manifest: the two greatest unquestionably are, first, the loss of so many able men to the service of the country, as well as the devotion of almost the whole powers of all leading men to party contests.”—LORD BROUGHAM ON THE EFFECTS OF PARTY.

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1853.

THE COALITION MINISTRIES.

“THE people of England,” we were lately told, “never loved a Coalition.” The saying is remarkable not only on account of the speaker and the occasion on which it was uttered, but as expressing a feeling which undoubtedly has for a very long period of time been common to all political parties.

The origin of this feeling we conceive must be traced to the history of the Ministry of Mr. Fox and Lord North in 1783, better known as the “Infamous Coalition.” Except that Ministry we know of no Coalition since the parliamentary element of our Constitution obtained ascendancy over the monarchical which could have given rise to this popular prejudice.

We remember only two other Ministries since that period which can be called coalitions. The first, that of which the Duke of Newcastle and Mr. Pitt were the leaders, and which was in office at the accession of George III.; but although this was a Coalition, it undoubtedly commanded the approbation and possessed the affection of the people, and cannot be cited as an instance of the truth of the

saying in question, nor heterogeneous as were its elements as respects the character of its members, was there that opposition between their principles which have alienated public opinion from other Coalitions.

The other instance was the junction between a section of the Whigs and Mr. Canning, and of the former with the surviving Tory members of his Ministry after his death. The want of any leader after the death of Canning, who commanded the respect or confidence of the Sovereign, the Parliament, or the People, and the want of any known or definite political principle of which it was the representative, speedily terminated the existence of this Government—an event which was received by the public with indifference, perhaps on account of the prejudice against it as a Coalition. Notwithstanding the clamour on this ground which was raised against this Ministry on its meeting Parliament, we do not see there was anything in its history which justifies the prejudice against Coalitions; the clamour proves only the existence of the prejudice, and we conceive that its origin is to be looked for in the history of the “Infamous Coalition.”

At the opening of a Session when a “Coalition Ministry” is first to meet Parliament, and it appears probable that the fact of its being a Coalition will form one of the grounds of attack of a powerful opposition, it may afford amusement if not instruction to give a brief history of the “Infamous

Coalition," its origin, its acts, and its fall, and to compare with it the history of the two parties now in office, and the events which have placed them together in power.

On a hasty examination of the history of the Coalition Ministry of 1783 nothing appears but a junction of parties who, having been formerly opposed to each other, agreed in condemning the particular measures of foreign policy proposed by the existing Government, and having procured a vote from the Commons in accordance with their opinions, thereby according to the common law of the Constitution deposing their opponents from office, and succeeding thereto themselves, exhibiting while in power a successful parliamentary career and a statesman-like discharge of the duties of office, and being finally overthrown by one of those acts of "kingcraft which George III. began early and practised late."* But an examination a very little more searching into the state of parties prior to and at the formation of this Administration, and into the avowed political principles and actions of its sections while in opposition or formerly in office and a comparison of these with their ministerial career when combined, will shew the origin and vindicate the justice of the ill fame they gained as a Coalition.

In March, 1782—sixteen years after his ungracious dismissal by George III.—the Marquis of Rockingham, "in a dark and troubled day was

* Lord Brougham's Speeches, vol. iv. p. 118.

again called upon to save the State brought to the very brink of ruin by the same perfidy and obstinacy which had embarrassed and at length overthrown his first Administration.”* His predecessor was Lord North, who had been compelled to resign in consequence of the success of the Americans in the war of independence, which he had persisted in to please the personal feelings of George III., contrary to the feelings of Parliament and the Country. The Cabinet was composed of the following members:—Lord Rockingham, Premier; Lord Shelburne, Home, and Mr. Fox, Foreign Secretary; Lord John Cavendish, (described by Horace Walpole as “having a confidence in himself that nothing could equal, and a thirst of dominion still more extraordinary”), Chancellor of the Exchequer; the Duke of Grafton (an ex-Premier), Privy Seal; Viscount Keppel, First Lord of Admiralty; Lord Camden, President of the Council; the Duke of Richmond, Master of the Ordnance; Lord Thurlow, Chancellor, as under the last Government; General Conway (leader of the Commons under the first Rockingham Government), Commander-in-Chief; and John Dunning, Lord Ashburton, (formerly Solicitor-General), Chancellor of Lancaster. Attached to the Ministry, though not of the Cabinet, were Edmund Burke, Paymaster of the Forces; and the Duke of Portland, (described by Erskine in a letter to Attorney-General Lee,† as “believed to be Whig

* Macaulay's Essays. Last Edition.

† Memoirs of Marquis of Rockingham, vol. ii. 127.

in heart though not wholly so in his conduct,") as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

The politics of this Government were essentially Whig, its chief had been chosen sixteen years before to form the ministry which after the defeats of Lord Bute and George Grenville and the long exile of the Whigs from place and power, George III. had been compelled to endure. United in opinion and long associated in office or opposition with the Premier were Fox, Lord John Cavendish,* the Dukes of Richmond and Grafton, Conway and Burke. These men were the most advanced liberals of that day, the other section of the Cabinet, viz. Lords Shelburne, Camden, Ashburton, and Thurlow, with Barrè the Treasurer of the Navy, were the representatives of a section or party of which Chatham had been the head, and were the forerunners of the modern Tory school, of which in later days Lord Eldon and Perceval were the chiefs, combining the attachment of the Whigs to the House of Hanover, with the devotion to the person of the Sovereign, which was the distinguishing mark of the Stuart Tories.

The opposition to the Rockingham Administration was headed by Lord North, and his supporters while in administration, commonly known as the

* According to Sydney Smith, the first part of Walpole's description of this Whig leader is equally true of a noble Lord of the present day, also of Whig principles, and of the same Christian name.

“King’s friends,” they were in name Whigs, that is, they professed attachment to the House of Hanover, but they were in political principle hardly to be distinguished from the Shelburne section of the Government. Subserviency to the views and prejudices of the Sovereign, however irrational and opposed alike to public opinion and public interest, and regardless as well of their own personal consistency as of the principles of political morality, was the specific difference of Lord North and his followers.

Few who read these pages will not remember the brief but eloquent summary of the acts of the second Rockingham Ministry which is given by Moore in his life of Sheridan, they were however but the blossom giving promise of the fruit which the summer would bring, but this fair promise was blighted by the unexpected death of Lord Rockingham on the first of July, 1782.

The sudden loss of their head at once plunged the Cabinet and the Whig party into disorder, and divided their councils by personal ambition and distracted them by selfish intrigue, while George III. hating as he always did a Whig administration, and not daring to restore the ministry of Lord North, on account of the feeling against them for protracting the American war, determined to remove the more decided Whigs and to replace them with those who held the political principles of Chatham. The following change in the ministry took place : Lord Shelburne succeeded to the Treasury ; William

Pitt, heir of the talents and principles of his father, succeeded at the Exchequer, to Lord John Townsend, Lord Grantham and Thomas Townsend to Mr. Fox and Lord Shelburne as Secretaries of State. Lords Thurlow, Ashburton, Keppel, and Camden and the Dukes of Grafton and Richmond retained their offices. Sir George Young succeeded General Conway as Secretary-at-War, Henry Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville, became Treasurer of the Navy in room of Barrè who displaced Burke as Paymaster of the Forces, and Earl Temple succeeded the Duke of Portland as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

It is not necessary for the purposes of these pages to enter into the history of the Shelburne Ministry. It would be easy to vindicate their policy and shew them to be one of the most able and successful administrations that ever governed this country.

The formation of the Shelburne Ministry gave deep offence to the pure Whig section of the late Cabinet, but as a large number of the party determined to adhere to the Government the Whigs (for from this period that term can only be applied to Fox and his followers) were in a minority in the Commons, on the other hand Lord North and his supporters were equally enraged at their return to power being hindered by the formation of a Cabinet which though Whig in name was entirely identical in principle with themselves. Both these factions

therefore joined in opposition to the Ministry for the purpose of driving them from power, this was done before the opening of the Session, and before therefore anything was known of their intended policy. What principle the parties to this alliance had in common, save enmity to Lord Shelburne's Government, could not be discovered, for the leaders had been long divided in opinion and action on the American War—the influence of the Crown—the necessity of Public Economy and a Reform in Parliament, and no compromise or adjustment of principles, nor any statement of concessions on the one side or the other, on these or any other questions of the day were announced; all that was known was that Mr. Fox and Lord North had joined in order by any means and at any rate to turn out the ministry. The annals of Parliamentary Government do not present another such instance of a combination formed exclusively on the principle of "*idem nolle atque idem velle*," and so totally excluding the more proper bond of union "*idem sentire de republica*."

Nothing of importance is known of the secret history of the rise and formation of this Coalition, it may be reserved for Lord John Russell in his promised Memoir of Fox to throw light on this not the least important event in not the least interesting chapter of modern history.

The Session was opened, December 1782, by the King, who in his speech declared the recognition of

American independence, and that provisional treaties of peace had been concluded with the United States, and with France and Spain.

The first operation of the combined forces was a motion by Fox for the production of these provisional treaties, which was lost by a large majority. It was quickly followed by a resolution moved by Mr. Hartley, son of the celebrated metaphysician, and himself the first Parliamentary leader of the Anti-Slavery movement, binding the Ministers not to propose a re-opening of the American War, which also was lost in a thin house by a considerable majority. Parliament shortly afterwards adjourned till 21st January, 1783. On the re-opening of Parliament the treaties with France and Spain, and the provisional treaty with America were laid before the Houses. In the Lords an address of thanks to the Crown, approving the terms of the treaties, was proposed, and carried after opposition. Lord Shelburne defended his policy at great length and with great ability, and the Government carried their address.

In the Commons a similar address was moved, but was met by Lord John Cavendish on the part of the Opposition, with an amendment, that the House, approving of the peace, would proceed to consider the treaties laid before them with "that serious and faithful attention which the subject deserved." A debate ensued, in which Lord North moved another amendment relating to the case of the American loyalists. The policy of the trea-

ties was severely arraigned by him, Sheridan and Fox, and defended by Pitt. The logical coherence of the debate was frequently broken by allusions to the unnatural coalition between "the lofty asserters of the prerogative and the worshippers of the majesty of the people." Ultimately the amendments were carried by a majority of sixteen. The principal objections to the peace were the terms with France, which, it was alleged, were not sufficiently beneficial to England, considering the exhausted state of her enemy. That the concessions to America were unnecessarily favourable to her. The abandonment of the American loyalists, and the arrangements with Spain, which were also censured for the same reasons. The opposition followed up the success of their amendments by Lord John Cavendish moving on February 21st, several resolutions pledging the House to the maintenance of the Peace, the fourth of which was, "That the concessions made to the adversaries of Great Britain by the provisional treaty and preliminary articles are greater than they were entitled to, either from the actual situation of their respective possessions, or from their comparative strength." The reports of the speeches of the mover, and of those of North, Fox, and Pitt, as they have come down to us, shew mainly an attack and defence of the Coalition; little is said on the policy of the treaties. This resolution was carried by a majority of seventeen, notwithstanding which the Ministry continued in office until, on the 24th

March, Mr. T. W. Coke, the Member for Norfolk, moved an address "for the appointment of an administration entitled to the confidence of the people," which was carried by an overwhelming majority. A Royal message in reply was sent March 26th: "That it was the earnest desire of the King to do everything that was in his power to comply with the wishes of his faithful Commons." Some of the Opposition being dissatisfied with this answer as not sufficiently explicit, talked of moving for a committee of enquiry why a new Administration was not formed. At Lord North's request this intention was abandoned; but on the 31st, no signs of a change of Ministry appearing, Lord Surrey, after having failed to obtain from Pitt any reply whether a new Government was or was not to be formed, proceeded to move another address, the terms of which underwent considerable revision by the leaders of the Coalition, but as ultimately settled it pointed out the "inevitable tendency of such delays to weaken the authority of Government, and the necessity for immediately carrying out the Peace." It was not, however, put from the chair, as it was made known in the course of the debate that a new Ministry would immediately be formed; and on the 2nd April following, the formation of the new Ministry was announced. The Cabinet was composed of four Whigs,—the Duke of Portland at the Treasury, Fox, Home Secretary, Cavendish at the Exchequer, Lord Keppel at the Admiralty,—and three

Tories,—Lord North, Foreign Secretary, Lord Stormont, President of the Council, and Lord Carlisle, Privy Seal. No Chancellor could be found to suit this Coalition, and the Seal was entrusted to a Commission, of which Lord Loughborough (of the North party) was the head. Burke was Paymaster of the Forces, Sheridan Treasurer of the Navy, and Windham first took office as Secretary for Ireland. From a letter of Burke's recently published,* it appears this combination was not effected until after "a hundred breakings off and renewals of tedious and perplexed negociation." Mr. Wilberforce has recorded his impression, that the public distrusted the Coalition from the first, and expected to see in its measures "a progeny stamped with the features of both parents—the violence of the one party, and the corruption of the other."†

It is not our purpose to write the history of this ministry in detail, we do not dwell therefore on the debates which assailed their appearance, in which they were accused of "having assailed and taken the royal closet by storm," and pass over without allusion many measures proposed and defended with great ability by the various members of the Cabinet, and in which they were successful. The first blow which shook them was the debate, May 7th, on Mr. Pitt's motion for Parliamentary Reform, a renewal of previous unsuccessful attempts on the same sub-

* Memoirs of Rockingham, vol. ii. p. 122.

† Wilberforce's Diary.

ject, (the main object of which was to increase the county and metropolitan members) Lord North strenuously opposed, as he had ever done, this motion, contending that "the idea that the Constitution was disordered was a fancy, and to treat it as diseased without any evidence of the distemper, was a phrenzy. The balance of the Constitution would be infringed and violated by the addition of members for the counties. It would give a decided superiority to the landed over the commercial interest." Mr. Fox on the other hand avowed himself "as before an advocate for Parliamentary Reform. In his opinion the Constitution required innovation and renovation. It was an error to say that the addition of more knights of the shire would make the landed interest overmatch the commercial, for they were inseparable." Independence of the Crown and not the extension of the elective franchise, seems to have been the object of Parliamentary Reformers at that period. The motion was lost by 293 against 149. This debate shewed that there existed in the Cabinet a long standing and irreconcilable difference of opinion on a point of no less importance than the constitution of Parliament,* which rendered their coalition in office inconsistent with the true principles of Parliamentary government.

* From a letter of the Duke of Portland, printed in the Rockingham Memoirs, vol. ii. 410, it appears he was strongly opposed to an increase of County Members, as tending unduly to augment the aristocratic element in the Constitution.

The financial policy of the Government was on the whole popular, and passed without any opposition, although the stamp laws were entirely revised, the duties much increased, and the stamps on receipts first imposed, which occasioned some opposition from the City of London. A Bill for reforming public offices was introduced by Mr. Pitt, intended to suppress the jobbing and waste then prevalent among the clerks and other official persons employed in the various departments of Government, and which had been contemplated by the late Government. To this measure of economical and administrative reform no reasonable objection could have been taken, but it was opposed by Lord John Cavendish in a weak and inconclusive speech—by Fox in a speech containing only an attack on the measures of the late Government—and by Burke in a declamatory invective against the opposition; notwithstanding the opposition of the Ministry the bill passed the Commons, but was rejected by 40 to 24 in the Lords. Its supporters protesting against its rejection on the ground that “there was evidence of gross abuse and mismanagement, and no reasonable expectation was held out that these abuses would be redressed in the common course and practice of office.”

The factious opposition to this measure, which from its nature was sure to be popular, and the glaring inconsistency of the part taken in that opposition by Burke, hitherto distinguished as the

Parliamentary advocate of administrative reform, the defeat of the Government, and its inevitable effect of weakening their position, increased that alienation of public confidence which had commenced with the revelation of their internal divisions on the subject of Parliamentary reform. They were further weakened by a debate in the Commons on the motion of Mr. Pitt for an address to the Crown, that "large sums of money which had at different times, and many of them very long since, been paid for public services to sub-accountants, amounting in the whole to above 44 millions, had not yet been accounted for, and submitting the necessity and importance of promptness in settling all public accounts, and for inquiry into the cases in question." In the course of Pitt's speech he alluded particularly to the cases of Rigby, Burke, and Barrè, of whom the first had held office under Lord North, and the two latter under the second Rockingham administration. Barrè had returned to office under the Shelburne cabinet, and Burke had returned to office under the Coalition, and all of them were known to be involved in these accounts.

The Ministry opposed this address (the propriety of which admits of no question), not disputing the justice or expediency of the motion. Sheridan, objecting to the authority or authenticity of the papers on which the motion was founded, moved as an amendment the substitution of the words "this House having reason to believe" for

the words "it appears to this House," and of the words "large sums of money" for "amounting in the whole to above 44 millions."

As thus amended the address was voted. The indisposition shewn by the Ministry to afford any inquiry into official abuses, or the financial burdens laid upon the country impoverished by the recent and expensive war, notwithstanding the former cry of the Whigs for economy, and the combination of both sections of the Cabinet in resisting inquiries which might affect their friends, tended to increase the widely-spread feeling of the want of all public spirit in the Ministry, and of their origin and continuance only in and for factious designs and purposes.

Parliament was prorogued on the 16th July, and shortly afterwards a general peace was proclaimed, the terms of which, as to France, Spain, and America, were not varied in any matter of importance from those of the Provisional treaties arranged by the Shelburne Ministry, and the opposition to which by the present Coalition had led to their defeat and overthrow.

The measure of the iniquities of the Coalition was thus rendered full.

Parliament again assembled on the 11th Nov., the addresses were voted in both Houses with cordial unanimity, a measure consistent, as the event shewed, and as events have more than once shewn in recent times, with a speedy overthrow of the

Government. The great measure announced in the speech from the throne, was one to provide for the Government of India, a subject which had been under serious discussion in the last Session ; and on the 18th Mr. Fox introduced his celebrated "India Bill," described by Pitt,* in a letter to the Duke of Rutland, as "the boldest and most unconstitutional measure ever attempted, transferring at one stroke, in spite of all charters and compacts, the immense patronage of the East to Charles Fox, in or out of office." As this, the last and great measure of the Coalition was also the stumbling-block which caused their fall, it is necessary to give an outline of its provisions. As it passed the Commons, it took from the East India Company the entire administration of their commercial and territorial affairs, and vested it for a period of four years, together with the appointment of all officers and servants, the rights of peace and war, and the disposal of the whole revenue, in the hands of seven Commissioners, to be appointed in the first instance by Parliament, but afterwards by the Crown, who were to be assisted by a Board of nine persons, each of them proprietors of £2000 in the Company's stock, to be appointed in the first instance by Parliament, and afterwards by the proprietors. The members of this assistant Board were to be removeable at the pleasure of any five of the Commissioners. This proposal raised, as any

* Vide Lord Mahou's Historical Essays, p. 269.

proposition from either side of the House would have raised, and did raise, from the other, a violent storm of opposition; “unconstitutional, illegal, and dangerous,” were the terms by which it was denoted—but many gentlemen opposed it, not so much on these grounds, as because it was proposed by a Coalition which they termed “an instance of political defection and apostacy that could admit of no defence.” Pitt was the most prominent as well as the most able opponent of the bill—he alleged, “the most drivelling Minister could not fail to secure a majority of either House of Parliament, with the patronage of two millions sterling proposed to be conferred upon him by this bill. Fox had acknowledged himself to be a party-man, and a man of ambition; and, from this bill, it appeared he was prepared to sacrifice the King, the Parliament, and the people, at the shrine of a party, and desired to elevate his present connections to a situation in which no political convulsions and no shiftings of party might be able to destroy their importance, and put an end to their ascendancy.” The Bill was supported by Burke in one of the most celebrated of his speeches, and the second reading carried by 217 against 103. The opposition was continued in the succeeding stages, but the Bill passed through Committee, in which the names of seven adherents of the Government were inserted as the Commissioners, read a third time, and carried up to the Lords.

In the course of the debates, reference was made

to the protests entered on the Lords' Journals against the East India Regulation Act of 1773, by Lords Rockingham, Fitzwilliam, and other Whig leaders, in which among various reasons assigned, and all which were in greater or less degree applicable to Fox's Bill, was the following:—

“Because the election to executive offices in Parliament is plainly unconstitutional, and an example of the most pernicious kind, productive of intrigue and faction, and calculated for extending a corrupt influence in the Crown. It frees Ministers from responsibility, while it leaves them all the effect of patronage. . . . It defeats the wise design of the Constitution which placed the nomination of all offices, either immediately or derivatively, in the Crown, whilst it committed the check upon improper nominations to Parliament. But this Bill, by confounding these powers, which the Constitution meant to keep separate, has destroyed this control, along with every wise provision of the laws to prevent the abuses of the nomination to, or exercise of the office.”

The second reading of the Bill in the Lords was fixed for December the 13th. George III. feeling that the Coalition was odious, as well as infamous, and that their dismissal would be acceptable both to the Parliament and the people, entered into negotiations with Earl Temple, the leader in the Lords “of the King's friends,” and a circular card (sub-

sequently produced in the Commons by Fox) was circulated among the Peers, which stated that his Majesty allowed Earl Temple to say, "that whoever voted for the India Bill was not only not his friend, but would be considered by him as his enemy, and if these words were not strong enough Earl Temple might use whatever words he might deem stronger or more to the purpose." If a writer of little authority may be believed, the King's opposition to the Bill was the result of *secret advice given him by Lord Thurlow*.*

This extraordinary and unconstitutional act had its effects, the Duke of Richmond, Earl Shelburne, and with them the trimmers among the Peers, joined the Court Lords, and on the 17th December the India Bill was rejected by 95 against 76. The writer above alluded to states, and we believe correctly, that the President of the Council spoke for the Bill on the 15th, but voted against it on the 17th.† The King followed up his indecent interference to obtain the defeat of his Ministers by an act of indecent haste to secure the result. In order to avoid any possibility of the Cabinet relying on the Commons against the majority of the Lords, late on the same night, a messenger was sent to the several Ministers to demand the Seals, and Pitt was commanded to form a new Administration.

So fell the Coalition Ministry. On reviewing

* Wraxall's Memoirs of his own Time, vol. ii. 442-4.

† Wraxall, ut supra.

its history it presents the appearance of a combination of two parties who, on the nature and extent of the influence rightly to be possessed by the Crown, and on the composition of Parliament, had long been divided in opinion, and who entered the Cabinet together, without either of them abandoning or changing such opinions. The Ministry of Lord North had fallen chiefly through the feeling of Parliament and the country against continuing the American war, to gratify the personal feeling and selfish pride of George III.; in this they had been determinedly opposed by the Whigs, led by Fox and Burke. And yet we find North and Fox in the Cabinet, and the supporters of both connected in the Administration—the one not owning that the American war was unjust in its origin, or too long prolonged; nor the other, that their opposition to its commencement or continuance was mistaken. It cannot be forgotten, either that the origin of the alliance on the Whig side arose out of their internal jealousies and quarrels after the death of Lord Rockingham. It is obvious what must be the results of a Coalition where the original principles of the party differ so widely; neither party can take any active step to carry out their theoretical principles, the only possible course of action for them is to discharge as well as they can the ordinary routine of Government. When any more decided action is attempted, it involves a compromise of principle. The truth of these propositions, the facts of the history we have been dwelling on sufficiently

shew. When to all these considerations is added the fact, that their official existence brought discredit on our Parliamentary Constitution, and rendered it possible for George III. to exercise the unconstitutional influence which led to their overthrow, and which he dared not have exercised against any Ministry possessing the confidence of Parliament and the people, it is not wonderful that the alliance of Fox and North retains to this day the opprobrious name of the "Infamous Coalition," and that recollecting it, "the people of England have never loved a coalition."

It is sufficient to state the history of this Coalition, to shew that the objections to it have no application to the Coalition Ministry of 1853, and are no ground of prejudice against them. From the time Sir Robert Peel accepted the Reform Bill as the law of the land, and stated his intention to faithfully carry it out, there has been a gradually increasing approximation in political opinion between his personal friends and adherents and the more intelligent members of the Conservative party generally on the one side, and the Whigs on the other.

The defeat of the first Peel ministry was in the fair and ordinary course of Parliamentary warfare, and the present junction shews no abandonment of principle on either side, as in the case of the India Bill of 1783.

If, as is not improbable, the questions of 1835 come again before Parliament, and either section of the Ministry shall be found to advocate different views

than heretofore, the length of time and the alteration of circumstances, joined to the gradual fusion which has been going on between them and their opponents, but present colleagues, will be sufficient to shew that it is a fair and legitimate change of opinion, and preclude the idea of a dishonourable abandonment or compromise of principle.

This fusion of opinion was proved, and at the same time increased, by the unanimous and cordial support which the liberal measures of Sir Robert Peel received from the Whigs, and the not less cordial support, which, in their turn, the Whigs received from him and his followers, from 1846 to 1852. This alliance, resting not on any formal compact or party reasons, but on similarity of opinion, had but two exceptions. The Foreign Policy debate and the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill; with regard to the former, Sir Robert Peel's speech shewed that his condemnation of the Foreign Policy of the Whigs was not universal or even general, and his vote was very much occasioned by the form of Mr. Roebuck's resolution, which the Ministry thought proper to adopt, while the more modified line of policy adopted by Lord Palmerston since that debate, and his absence from the Foreign Office in the present Cabinet, lead to the belief that this cause of difference in the Ministry is removed. With regard to the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, that question is passed, and it may confidently be hoped will not again arise.

The ground on which the late Ministry was displaced, was a legitimate instance of a combination between different sections of men, agreeing in a particular vote which they were bound to give irrespective of the fate of the Ministry; the principles of their combination was quite in harmony with their antecedents, and the facts connected with the commercial Legislation debate, shew there was none of the factious and indecent haste to terminate the official existence of the Derby Government, with which the Coalition of 1783 were animated against the Shelburne Ministry.

There remains only one possible resemblance between the Coalitions, the adoption by the present of the policy of the late Ministry, by the defeat of which they succeeded to power, but it will not tax their ingenuity to find many courses open to them, besides adopting the policy of their predecessors.

This examination of the history of the Coalition Ministry of 1783, and comparison of it with that of the present Government, is intended to shew that there is no just cause of prejudice or objection to the latter *merely as a Coalition*. Many attempts have been made to cast imputations on them on this ground, which will doubtless be renewed on the reopening of Parliament, and to prevent any impression being made on the minds of the public by such imputations, is the object of the foregoing pages.

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THE END.

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